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RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 6654
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RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 5667
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 7642
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 0495
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 0718
RHMFSS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFSS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 002454

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XOX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

SIPDIS
E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: OPRC KMDR IS

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

U.S. Elections

Key stories in the media:

All media led with and extensively reported on Election Day in the U.S. A headline in Yediot reads: QMcCain Is Everything that America Has Believed in; Obama Belongs to the New America.Q The Jerusalem Post quoted Israeli experts as saying that Sen. Obama will win the Jewish vote. Major media reported that a turning Democratic tide is

expected to sweep more Jews into Congress.

HaQaretz reported that Britain is pressing the EU to be stricter about labeling imports produced in West Bank settlements, leading Jerusalem officials to fear a confrontation with London over the settlements issue. They say the latest moves are aimed at applying diplomatic pressure on Israel in a bid to stop construction in the settlements.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Likud has issued a clear policy directive against Israeli talks with Iran to advisers of both U.S. presidential candidates, as well as to representatives of the State Department. Major media reported that MK Yuval Steinitz is behind this initiative. Yediot reported that Yuval Rabin, the son of the assassinated PM, is considering voting for Benjamin Netanyahu.

Leading media reported that on Sunday PA President Mahmoud Abbas ruled out the possibility of clinching a peace agreement with Israel by the end of the year.

Leading media reported that, despite the High Court of Justice's recommendation to consider amending the indictment filed against Lt.-Col. Omri Burberg and one of his subordinates, who were involved in firing at a bound Palestinian detainee during an anti-security fence demonstration, the Military Judge Advocate Brig.-Gen. Avichai Mandelblit decided to charge them with the sole count of conduct unbecoming an officer.

All media reported that yesterday Nachman Shai, chairman of the United Jewish Communities and former IDF Spokesman, announced that he was joining Kadima and would run in the party's primaries for the Knesset.

The Jerusalem Post reported that, citing a delay resulting from last year's teachers' strike, the Education Ministry came under harsh criticism for failing to issue required matriculation certificates to dozens of Israeli-Arab students hoping to begin their university studies in Jordan.

Leading media reported that 150 employees of the local Kodak plant were fired and that the production line was sent to China.

U.S. Elections:

Summary:

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: QIsrael, which says it is looking for a partner on the Arab side, must also examine the nature of the new American partner, because without him, it will have trouble finding an Arab partner who will agree to serious negotiations.

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: QThe best president for IsraelQ is the man who can best internalize the scale of the Iranian menace, and most effectively persuade Americans -- and responsible players in the international community -- to stop the mullahs before it's too late.

Diplomatic correspondent Shimon Shiffer wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: QIf [Obama] gets elected, Israeli pressure [about Iran] will not fall on attentive ears.

Military correspondent Amos Harel wrote in the independent, left-leaning HaQaretz: QIt's hard to ask Israelis to look at the wider picture with the threat of an Iranian bomb floating overhead, but an Obama victory would have a plethora of positive implications that don't necessarily have any connection to the Middle East.

Editor-in-Chief Amnon Lord wrote on page one of the nationalist, Orthodox Makor Rishon-Hatzofe: Q[ObamaQs] victory will be a reminder of the euphoria mingled with hatred that occurred in Israel with Ehud BarakQs victory over Netanyahu in 1999. The talk was about hope and peace -Q what we got was a war of terror, fear, and

enmity.

Block Quotes:

II. "Change Needed in the U.S."

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (11/4): QIsrael, which says it is looking for a partner on the Arab side, must also examine the nature of the new American partner, because without him, it will have trouble finding an Arab partner who will agree to serious negotiations.... The two presidential candidates, Democratic Senator Barack Obama of Illinois and Republican Senator John McCain of Arizona, have made a point of demonstrating their commitment to Israel's security. Neither, it may be believed, would deviate from the brave alliance between the two countries. However, after eight years of a conservative Republican president, the question arises: Has the time come for a new American policy in the region? A policy that will afford diplomacy a major role, that will back serious negotiations with Iran, that will assist the negotiations between Israel and Syria and will extend practical support to the Arab initiative and to ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? This kind of new policy needs a new leader to conduct it, a leader who is not committed to his predecessor's ideological fetters and is prepared to listen seriously to new ideas. Israel should hope for this kind of leader.

II. "America Decides"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (11/4): QOn Iran, Obama views the regime as a threat to the U.S. and would employ direct diplomacy to persuade Teheran to change its policies. If that didn't work, he says, all options are on the table. McCain promises to stop Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons, has pushed for restricting Teheran's ability to import refined petroleum, and pledges not to talk to the regime without pre-conditions. He's criticized Obama for his willingness to enter into unconditional negotiations. With regard to negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, Obama would take an activist approach to help reach an agreement, but would not dictate the terms of peace.... McCain, like Obama, supports the creation of a Palestinian state. He says he would never force Israel into concessions with anyone that seeks its destruction. He has made no statement on the 1967-plus formula. He's promised to move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.... Americans now decide whether to vote QCountry First or QChange We Need.Q Those who would factor Israel into their decision understand that our preeminent strategic concern is the Iranian threat. The Qbest president for IsraelQ is the man who can best internalize the scale of the Iranian menace, and most effectively persuade Americans -- and responsible players in the international community -- to stop the mullahs before it's too late.

III. "On the Way to Iran"

Diplomatic correspondent Shimon Shiffer wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (11/4): QIf [Obama] gets elected, Israeli pressure [about Iran] will not fall on attentive ears. Senior officials in the current U.S. administration have explained to their Israeli counterparts that returning to Tehran will expose the extent to which the Iranian people want the resumption of ties with the QGreat Satan.Q QLines for U.S. visas will be the blaring evidence of the justness of the move,Q said the senior officials. Khaled Mashal, the Chairman of HamasQs political bureau, who appears on the blacklist of many countries around the world, will also enjoy ObamaQs election. It can be assumed that the ban on U.S. representatives to contact Hamas will be canceled. Behind the laundered code name that appears in Barak ObamaQs diplomatic dictionary Q- QengagementQ Q- stands the change that will influence the new U.S. administrationQs relations with Israel: Obama will not have figures, movements, or countries beyond the fence. The U.S. presidentQs envoys will hold contacts with everyone.... But, despite everything, one must remember the circle closest to Obama includes at least three figures from the Chicago Jewish community who have been at his side since he began his course. They will be also there during the harsh days of the relationship with Israel.

IV. "Between Tehran and Mississippi"

Military correspondent Amos Harel wrote in the independent, left-leaning HaQaretz (11/4): QSupport for Israel is rooted deep in the heart of the Washington establishment. And, of course, we can't scoff at the declarations of the candidate [Obama] himself, who has reiterated his commitment to Israel. But there is one unknown in Obama's foreign-policy equation: his attitude toward Iran.

Officials in Jerusalem won't say it out loud, but Obama's support for renewing the dialogue with Tehran is making them very uncomfortable.... It's hard to ask Israelis to look at the wider picture with the threat of an Iranian bomb floating overhead, but an Obama victory would have a plethora of positive implications that don't necessarily have any connection to the Middle East, such as for interracial relations in the U.S. and America's image around the world. Even more important: Obama is poised to become president of a country where just 50 years ago in some states a black man risked being hung on the nearest tree merely for looking at a white woman; a place where just 45 years ago Jewish civil rights activists were murdered, their bodies thrown into a Mississippi delta swamp for registering and encouraging black voters; where Martin Luther King, Jr. was murdered by a white racist for daring to argue that blacks deserved equal rights.

IV. QGambling on Hope

Editor-in-Chief Amnon Lord wrote on page one of the nationalist, Orthodox Makor Rishon-Hatzofe (11/4): QIt should be said that those who read commentators and editorialists, in particular those of right-wing newspapers in America, get the impression of acceptance of a one-party regime in Washington, headed by President Obama. If it turns out tomorrow that this is the American peopleQs decision, there is room for wholeheartedly saluting that people.... Until the mid-60s most African Americans did not have the right to vote.... [But ObamaQs] foreign policy is enigmatic and fraught with dangers. A man who has befriended such spurious characters has never before been elected president. His victory will be a reminder of the euphoria mingled with hatred that occurred in Israel with Ehud BarakQs victory over Netanyahu in 1999. The talk was about hope and peace -Q what we got was a war of terror, fear, and enmity.

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